

SUCCESS

The Lake County Workforce Development Newsletter

Fall 2012

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Medical Assistant Benefited from Training Twice

Kilanee was promoted to a Medical Assistant in May 2012 at a pulmonary clinic. She says she wouldn't be in this position without *WIA (Workforce Investment Act)* training. "They helped me with my resume, my job search, and training." She initially participated in a computer training course for youth in 2004. That training allowed her to launch her first career in customer service. However when she was laid off in 2008, she returned to *Lake County Workforce Development* for help.

This time Kilanee decided to enter the growing field of healthcare. She enrolled in the medical assisting course at the College of Lake County in 2009. While working toward her Associate degree, one of her professors referred her to a medical center where she began working as a Patient Service Assistant. This year, she was promoted to Medical Assistant. "I believe I've found my career," she says with a smile. She says she is relieved to be able to take care of her son and cover all her household bills. As she works on her final two courses toward her degree, she advises other jobseekers to return to school. "You won't regret it!"

Carpenter Turns to Manufacturing

Derek is currently completing his Associate Degree while working as a CNC Programmer for a company that manufactures medical devices and other components. This is a big change from his previous career. When he was laid off as a Carpenter/ Framer in August 2007, he tried to operate his own carpentry business for several years. His wife went back to work to try to help the couple stay afloat, but they were "barely even making it." Derek knew he needed a stable job, so he asked *Lake County Workforce Development* for help.

After researching growing careers and touring a manufacturing facility with a friend who was a CNC Machinist, Derek decided that CNC Programming was the best career for him. Funded through the *Workforce Investment Act (WIA)*, he started a certificate program at the College of Lake County. While completing his first certificate, he began sending out a minimum 20 resumes per week. He located a job listing on Craigslist and was hired November 2011. The employer told him that the main reason he was hired was because of his up-to-date CNC certificate.



Networking Works for Business Analyst

For more than ten years, Ken worked at a large insurance company where he was first an Applications Developer, then promoted to a Team Lead. He thought he was at the pinnacle of his career until he was laid off on his birthday in August 2011. Concerned about his future, he attended an information session at the Lake County Job Center and applied for training under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) grant. In November 2011, Lake County Workforce Development funded Ken to attend training in database administration and update his knowledge of SQL (a programming language).

Ken wanted to find employment quickly to support his family. He attended workshops at the Job Center and met with a staff member who emphasized the importance of networking. When he applied for a position on Dice.com, he realized he knew the IT Director from a previous job. Instead of merely applying online, Ken contacted this former manager and requested help. That contact led to an interview. In July 2012, Ken was hired as a Business Analyst for a major healthcare company. He says he didn't realize the importance of networking prior to this. He loves his new job because it combines his business savvy and technical skills.



Ken said the hardest things to manage during unemployment was losing confidence in himself.

"Job search involves many rejections."

Job search assistance is available to everyone at either the Waukegan or Grayslake Job Center. From May to July 2012:

- Public computers were used **5846** times, and
- **1052** people attended a workshop or information session onsite.

An additional **534** adults in Lake County received training services under the Workforce Investment Act between July 2011 and June 2012!

Business Services

Check out these testimonials from local employers that utilized Business Services in 2012:

"I stumbled across the Job Center . . . at least 6 years ago. Since that time, as a Human Resource Manager, I have relied on workforce development to assist with the following:

- Supplying seasonal temporary employment at no cost to the village;
- Posting help wanted advertisements at no cost (so the village could reach out to local residents in need of work);
- Various training & development seminars and workshops that have improved my own skills as an HR Manager dealing with employment issues, acts and laws in Illinois; and
- Co-sponsoring annual employment expos with the village.

During a time when budgets have been slashed everywhere; the Job Center continues to provide little to no cost opportunities to bring business and job candidates together, addressing the vital need to fight unemployment in our county."

Nancy, Human Resource Manager, Village of Round Lake Beach



I have used the services of the Lake County Workforce Development numerous times during the past years to help find and hire qualified technicians for my shop. I have found the knowledge and expertise [of staff] to be invaluable towards finding and hiring employees who have proven to be great assets to my company and its growth.

Renee, Co-Owner/Operator
Ernie's Auto Service, Zion IL

"Lake County Workforce Development . . . helped us apply and receive grants to expand our business [and] helped us fill open positions in our medical office . . . We have not had to advertise anywhere else."

Lisa, Office Manager
Complete Orthopaedic Care, Lincolnshire, IL

"Our brand new full service property had a need to recruit close to 50 employees and we have been searching for the very best. Workforce staff were incredibly knowledgeable about all of your services and a wealth of information . . . We were very pleased with the quality of candidates you were able to bring to us."

Janine, Front Office Manager
Holiday Inn Gurnee Convention Center

Lake County Workforce Development maintains a "Talent Pipeline" with resumes of current trainees. Call the Business Service team at 847.377.3446 to find out if we have a candidate who can fill your company's needs!

Youth in Medical Training

Sometimes young people need a boost as they reach for their first career. Lake County Workforce Development can send qualified youth ages 19 to 22 who have completed a high school diploma or GED to training to help them make this critical transition. *"We focus on training in high growth areas,"* explains Program Manager Jennifer Everett. *"For this reason, quite a few of the training options are currently in the medical field."* She adds, though, that participants have their choice of many different career fields.



Phlebotomy training offers participants three courses in phlebotomy and an internship. **Jennifer** completed her classes in record time—but decided to continue her studies with medical assistant certification at the College of Lake County. She was offered a job at a clinic specializing in head and neck treatment when she finished her internship.



Pharmacy Technician training offers participants 90 hours of training through the College of Lake County. They complete an internship through local pharmacies and take the state certification exam to become a Pharmacy Technician. Three graduates from this program were hired by Walgreens in spring 2012: **Gabriela, Rodney and Rashad**. Rodney said he was working as a bus boy with very few hours before completing training. Rashad also worked in food service. He explains that he enrolled in the program because he *"needed a change for the better."*



Medical Office Assistant training is a 10 week course that **Stephanie** began in March 2012. She learned medical terminology, Medisoft (computer software) and job search techniques. During one of her class exercises, she created an Excel spreadsheet listing employers within her community. She contacted these employers with a letter of interest. One of those employers responded to her letter and interviewed her. She began working as a full-time receptionist at a dental office in June 2012.

Before training, Stephanie said she cared for a dementia patient but was laid off. She wanted to continue in health care, but her previous employer wouldn't provide a reference for her due to company policy. Stephanie says the worst feeling is *"not knowing where you're going and feeling hopeless."* She advises other jobseekers to *"go out of your way to get educated."*





Summer Jobs

163 Lake County youth were employed through the **Summer Youth Employment Program for 2012**. The county-funded program put the youth to work at approximately 35 work sites throughout Lake County. Summer workers were paid \$8.25 per hour, approximately 25 hours per week, for seven-week assignments at various townships, park districts, cities, libraries and non-profit organizations in Lake County.



Participants worked in **camp counseling, indoor and outdoor maintenance and clerical support**.

They learned new skills and earned a valuable paycheck. The heat was a challenge this year since many of the jobs were outdoors. Workforce Development staff are proud of the hard work these young people completed!



The **Summer Youth Employment Program**, funded by Lake County, serves high school youth, ages 14 to 18 (up to age 21 with an IEP), who meet federal eligibility guidelines.

Information about the 2013 program will be available on our website in January!

www.lakecountyjobcenter.com



Meet the WIB

All workforce development programs in Lake County operate under the oversight and strategic guidance of the Lake County Workforce Investment Board (WIB).

Long-time WIB members Todd Mundorf and Bonnie Schirato were recently elected to serve as chair and vice chair for the upcoming year.

Q: Where do you work and what do you do?

Todd: I work at Midwest Generation's Waukegan Generating Station. I'm responsible for the effective, safe operation of a coal fired generating station and facility operated by 84 employees. This facility provides enough electricity for over 600,000 single family homes.

Bonnie: I'm responsible for Human Resources with Physicians Interactive, an organization focused on providing healthcare information, access to medication samples and mobile decision support tools to medical professionals everywhere.

Q: Why did you join the WIB?

Todd: I was invited to join the WIB several years ago and was excited about the opportunity to give back to the community through an organization that has helped so many. My mother was a program manager in California for youth programs . . . Following a family tradition I began my tenure on the Youth Council and always enjoy hearing the success stories from the youth programs.

Bonnie: I was invited to join the WIB several years ago, and frankly had never heard of it prior to that invitation. When I understood that one of the challenges of the WIB was engaging the private business sector such that we could more fully understand the employer needs and build a path for the jobseeker to meet those needs, I was in.

Q: As someone who makes hiring decisions, what advice do you have for jobseekers?

Todd: The resume is the first step in gaining the prospective employers attention, and it needs to be professional. Understand the position you are applying for and provide details in your resume that highlight your ability to perform well in the position.

The interview is your opportunity to shine. Do your homework and understand what the company does and the major responsibilities of the job for which you have applied. Always be prepared to ask questions, an interview is a two way conversation. Listen to the questions being asked during the interview, write them down if necessary and don't be shy about asking clarifying questions. Your interview is your time to 'brag' about yourself, which can be uncomfortable; however you need to convey to the interviewers that you are the best person for the job.

Bonnie: I always suggest that jobseekers do their homework. One of the first questions I'll ask a candidate is, "What do you know about us?" I don't really expect them to get the answer 100% correct—we're a complicated business—but I do want to know that they've at least tried to learn about us through our websites, LinkedIn, press articles, etc. I really appreciate it when they make the effort to learn, and it leads me to believe that they will continue to make that effort if they join our organization.

Also, I ALWAYS suggest that you have questions prepared—even if you're meeting with the 4th person from the company. Be prepared to ask something about the company's business, financials, culture, whatever. Just DON'T say that you don't have any questions at all.



Chairman Todd Mundorf brings a passion for helping youth to the WIB.



Vice Chair Bonnie Schirato delivers "hands on" help to job seekers as a speaker at Job Center events.

Veterans Show Work Ethic in Nature Preserve



The Job Center now
features a workshop for
veterans every month.

For details call
847.543.7481

Thanks to a grant administered by Lake County Workforce Development, 11 veterans were placed in positions for four months this summer with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). They come from all types of backgrounds: college, retirement, construction, army reserves, and warehouse. One participant said he was glad to earn a paycheck while gaining valuable experience. Another said he hoped that completing this job would be a *"great opportunity to show my work ethic."*

Workers are currently clearing trails, beaches, roads and picnic areas in a nature preserve. Site supervisor Bob Feffer said the crew has been busy removing dangerous plant species and attributes their diligence to their military training.



Monthly Workshop for Veterans

In May, Military veteran Miguel attended a workshop specifically for veterans at the Job Center of Lake County. Afterwards, he networked with Sherry Kruse of the Veteran's Assistance Commission of Lake County. Miguel has 5+ years experience with the U.S. Army and recently re-enlisted with the National Guard. He says he is seeking a civilian medical career and attended the workshop for job search and resume tips. He was particularly interested in learning how to explain his extensive military experience in civilian terms.



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Healthy Career Inspired Others

As Mindy sits in her office in a chiropractic clinic and discusses healthy food choices, you would never guess that she's launching her fourth career. Through much of that, the Job Center of Lake County was there. *"The Job Center has been a lifesaver. The computer and internet access is critical. There are people to assist you with your wording and grammar. I'm from the rural south, but I don't need to sound like that on a resume."*

After an honorable discharge from the United States Navy, Mindy went to work for a major electronics manufacturer. During that time, her spouse died and she was left to raise three children. Four years later, she transitioned into the food service field, working at fast food restaurants and a corporate cafeteria. One of those jobs nearly killed her. *"Fried chicken was free at work and I became a high-fat addict. My gall bladder started to shut down because of what I was eating every day."* This inspired a passion for nutrition. The University Center of Lake County helped her identify an online nutrition program that would allow her to care for her children, continue working and attend classes.

In 2012, Mindy graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Applied Clinical Nutrition. She again worked with staff at the Job Center to update her job search techniques and created a profile and joined relevant groups on Linked In. Through her Linked In profile, she made contact with a chiropractor who was seeking to add a nutrition specialist to her office. She began her new career at Delany Chiropractic & Wellness Center in March 2012.



Mindy's story
convinced 10 other
adults to continue
their education.

Do you have a success story to share?
Contact editor Eva Locke at 847.377.3456